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7 January 1954

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR OPERATIONS

SUBJECT: Overall Requirements for Propaganda Analysis

1. In response to your request this office has prepared the attached study of Soviet Bloc intelligence requirements. It would be highly useful to have thorough propaganda analysis on these subjects in support of national intelligence estimates. The list is, of course, illustrative rather than exhaustive and covers only the key areas of the Bloc. Moreover, it was prepared from the point of view of a consumer, and we recognize that some of the subjects might not, at least in their present form, be suitable for propaganda analysis. We are aware that it requires a trained propaganda analyst to ascertain which topics can be most fruitfully studied. Finally, we believe that propaganda analysis operations need not be limited to meeting such external requirements but should be a continuing element in the intelligence process, independently analyzing Bloc mass communications, and constantly providing to consumers like O/NE a self-initiated flow of analyses.

2. The wide use by the entire intelligence community of the existing FBID monitoring of Soviet propaganda is ample indication of the unquestioned value of this source in giving us insights into developments behind the Curtain. We believe, however, that the value of this great mass of descriptive raw material is greatly enhanced when analyzed by experts and put into more finished form. The propaganda analyses which have been done by OO/FBID's small analysis unit have been extremely useful in the preparation of NIE's. Cases in point are studies done for us on Albania, Yugoslavia, East Germany, etc. The very value of these studies convinces us that this source should be more fully tapped. In our opinion propaganda analysis can turn a Soviet weapon — their propaganda — into a potent intelligence tool, one all the more urgently needed because the Soviet security system makes our intelligence data on this critical area so hard to come by and so sparse.

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3. In our list of requirements we have sought to provide FBID and FID with the guidance necessary to focus their attention on current and future problems of concern to the rest of the intelligence community. However, we believe that FBID should also be provided with the means to carry out retrospective studies designed to produce those necessary background generalizations on Soviet propaganda behavior which are essential to sound current analysis. For example, the implicit generalizations upon which are based the conclusions of such excellent studies as The Great Stalin Projects, and Nuclear Weapons in Soviet Propaganda should be susceptible of further testing and refinement. The absence of such studies is a major weakness which limits the ability of propaganda analysis to provide sharp and coherent interpretations. Therefore, we have included suggestions for such studies in our requirements in the hope that FBID will be able, either itself or through external research, to devote an increasing effort to building up this indispensable background material.

4. In presenting these requirements we are aware that many of them are already being partially met, insofar as resources permit, by FBID. We are also aware that every intelligence analyst on the Soviet Bloc (in O/EE, O/CI, OIR, G-2, etc.) is himself doing some degree of propaganda analysis as part of his daily work. We believe, however, that the RAND studies and others have demonstrated conclusively that the best propaganda analysis must be done by trained experts with a backlog of experience and with constant and ready access to all the background studies and raw materials. In our opinion this can be done effectively only by units such as OO/FBID and FID.

SHERMAN KENT
Assistant Director
National Estimates

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